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VICTORIANA

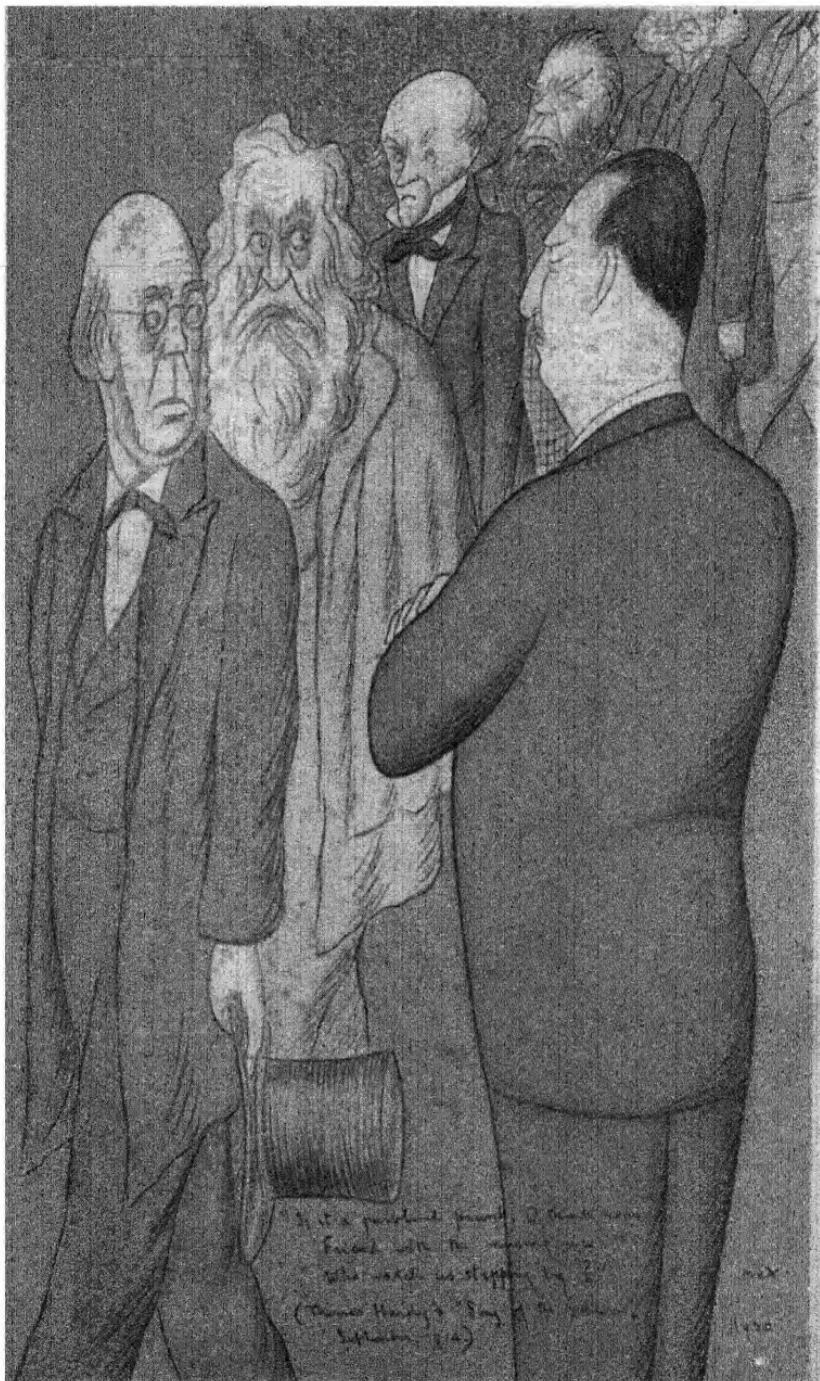
By the same Authors

SOBER TRUTH

A Collection of Nineteenth-Century episodes, Fantastic, Grotesque, and Mysterious.

Compiled and edited by
MARGARET BARTON and OSBERT SITWELL.

With a Preface by OSBERT SITWELL
and 17 Illustrations.



MR. OSBERT SITWELL WATCHES THE VICTORIANS STEP BY

BY MAX BEERBOHM

VICTORIANA

A SYMPOSIUM OF VICTORIAN WISDOM

edited, and compiled from many original sources,
by

MARGARET BARTON
AND
OSBERT SITWELL

with a frontispiece in colour by
MAX BEERBOHM

and an introduction by
AUGUSTINE RIVERS

and a preface by
OSBERT SITWELL

“ And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet.”

DUCKWORTH
3 Henrietta Street, W.C.2

1931

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INTRODUCTION
BY
AUGUSTINE RIVERS

As one who, by the kindness of the editors, has watched the gradual building up of this book through many months with never-failing delectation, I have asked them to permit me to make a few suggestions to the public. In the first place : “Victoriana” is a short book, and to extract out of its pages the fullest, finest aroma, it is well to read right through them at one sitting. Then, too, it makes very pleasant reading aloud and has, I understand, been to a certain extent designed for this very purpose, in the hope that it may serve a little to banish the long ennui of winter evenings for those that, like myself, are debarred, either by their own choice or by circumstance, from finding solace in the screeching of the talkies or such other urban enjoyments. Moreover, I think many people will discover that one perusal of “Victoriana” by no means exhausts its delights, and, after my own example, will insist at once on reading it all over again with a similar heightening of their pleasure.

I should also like to direct the attention of the readers of this volume to another one – in case they have overlooked it – by the same talented collaborators. Entitled “Sober Truth,” this is a miscellany of extraordinary events that occurred during the nineteenth century,

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collected as far as possible from the direct contemporary reports of them and with no editorial comment intruded. As Mr. Osbert Sitwell pointed out in the spirited preface to it, this volume was intended to lead up to the present one, “*Victoriana*,” in an attempt to indicate the wide divergence which existed between the theory and practice of the nineteenth century ; that is to say, between its happenings and its dicta. For under the platitudes and the pomposities, life, the old life, still continued, refusing to be stultified or stifled. Thus the murders committed by Jack the Ripper, or the appearance of a mermaid to a schoolmaster off the coast of Caithness, when considered with the utterances of Mr. Gladstone and Bishop Wilberforce, are thrown into a much deeper relief.

Finally, I should like to suggest that “*Victoriana*” be used in all schools. It would make a most efficient text-book, since it is concerned with one of the things to which the attention of the young should most certainly be called, a matter, furthermore, that is utterly neglected at present and yet is of the utmost consequence to them ; how easily the “good and great” are mistaken. And an acquaintance with this book might lead the children, when they grow up, to assume that the policies advocated by “great men” — statesmen and generals — no less than their high-sounding but windy words, are sometimes in fault, and that “just and glorious wars” and all other kinds of typical parliamentary and diplomatic megalomania may, also, be a mistake — in the future as much as in the past : in which case they

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would allow the “good and great” to revel in their gestures and perorations, but themselves would do nothing to translate these things into action, and accordingly the speeches and the patriotic songs would end, where they began, on empty air.

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The description of this book which appears on the title-page – “A Symposium of Victorian Wisdom” – is one which we trust will not be read in too sardonic a sense. A symposium we hope it may prove to be in the full meaning of that word – “a banquet with philosophic conversation” : at any rate it should give cause for reflection on the vanity of human confidence. As for the qualification *Victorian*, we were led in our researches to seek, not for absolute wisdom - of which it is acknowledged that there is never a superabundance in any one epoch – but for the particular counterfeits of it which were accepted as genuine in the long days of the great Queen, yet could have passed for it in no other age. Nevertheless, Victorian wisdom was no more misleading, as we are anxious to demonstrate in subsequent volumes, than Edwardian or Georgian wisdom. The only positive augmentation of true sagacity in these days is our own doubt of it ; an increased belief in our own fallibility.

Thus the key to the book, the theme which we cause to be illustrated on so many diverse instruments, is enounced on the first page by the late Mr. Gladstone : “It is true that good and great men may be mistaken.” And in *Victoriana* it has been our effort, among other, lesser objects, to prove that he was justified at least in this one melancholy aphorism : true, too true, is it Moreover, as we study the records of his time, it almost begins to appear as though this lamented statesman, non-committal as his discovery must seem at first sight, was,

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even at that, unduly sanguine ; until we find ourselves wondering whether this particular conjunction of Victorian goodness with Victorian greatness was not peculiarly inimical to true wisdom and whether the good and great of that era were, not only liable, but especially prone, to be mistaken ? And the quality which renders this unfortunate aptitude at once grotesque and fascinating as a spectacle is their assurance ; their certainty of the wrongness, wickedness, and stupidity of every other nation, system, and epoch as much as their conviction of their own innate sagacity—in addition, of course, to their goodness and greatness. Pathos, as well as absurdity, lurks in this outlook, since any human oracle, being mortal, is both comic and saddening to the rest of mankind. Indeed, in this very union of positiveness with invariable error is contained the secret of the ancient, heartrending humour of the clown, since nobody seems more sure of the outcome of the trick he is attempting to play off on his neighbour, and with no one is failure more consistent and inevitable. He who runs could not be less suspicious, we feel, of the fall in store for him. Further, just as with clowns it is themselves who provide, first in their crowing certainty and then in their discomfiture, the needful comedy, without interruption from the audience or interference by other members of the troupe, so it should be with all those distinguished by this identical, fallacious confidence. Alas ! usually, in writing of those who talk to us in this book, the fun is all too generously supplied by the authors rather than by the people whose history they are presenting.

The idea for *Victoriana*, then, came to us after this

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fashion. Of late years there has developed a mode – originated by that eminent Georgian, Mr. Lytton Strachey, who remains by far the ablest and most subtle exponent of this kind of literature – for Victorian biography. The vogue spread, broadening up from its Victorian base to include any prominent person of any age. Victorians, nevertheless, are still the favourite victims.

In the hands of minor writers, however, biography soon degenerated, swelling into the soft, elephantine journalism of Herr Emil Ludwig, crammed with every scenic and dramatic effect that obviousness could originate and ponderosity carry out (the perfect bedtime book for a democracy eager to be soothed and flattered), or dwindling into wan, daylight-firework, exploded by the youthful high spirits of numberless middle-aged English writers. Still the army grew. A legion of American biographers were by now scratching countless pages with their bright, keen pens. Before long almost as many people seemed to have written such books as to have read them. In England no well-educated diplomat or cultured “young-man-about-town” must fail to have published a sprightly and somewhat disparaging account of a great Victorian, preferably a poet, before he reaches forty, or his promise¹ – the one attribute all such people possess – will be henceforth accounted as unfulfilled. These books are usually concerned in mocking the really great figures of the

¹After listening to the speeches at a Hawthornden prize-giving a year or two ago, where there was much talk of “youthful promise,” the writer remembers Sir Edmund Gosse, who was sitting next him, turning to him and saying in a clear, determined tone that rose above all the lisnings and stutterings on the platform, “Do you consider that I have *promise*? Everybody seems to have it nowadays. . . . I fear it’s something I *always* lacked.”

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nineteenth century, the poets and writers, rather than the generals and statesmen, who, inflated dummies that many of them were, seem the very models for such burlesque treatment. Thus Mr. Gladstone, a much more ludicrous figure in his own way than ever were Tennyson, even when most typically a temporal peer, or Swinburne, when, a deaf, twittering old man with fluttering hands, he would walk across Wimbledon Common, is generally spared.

Notwithstanding, biography gradually became a recognised vehicle for belittling the great ; until they were great no longer. And here it seemed to us altogether to defeat its own purpose : for while second to none in considering the Victorian age as an inherently ludicrous no less than romantic epoch, yet in the fact that most of the Great Victorians were great, in spite of themselves great, even though they were all too sure of their importance and unconscious of their liability to human error, resides all the fun that there is to be extracted from the situation. Deprive them of their genius, make “too much fun” of them, and the secret mind of the reader very rightly rallies to their defence.

Now to display the weakness of a character in order to engage the sympathy of the reader is a legitimate though little understood method in novel-writing, but in biography, where the interest of the book arises from the greatness of the central figure, it cannot be indulged beyond a certain very limited point. Moreover, in the majority of these books, this machinery simply did not work, for it was soon plain that by far the best, most interesting and amusing, part of these volumes began where the elegant, simpering showmen

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abstained from their chatter and for a moment permitted the members of the troupe they were displaying to talk among, and speak for, themselves. To write *about* the Victorians was, surely, superfluous when themselves were still thus able, from the fleecy pastures of the clouds, to convey their ideas, ambitions, and the atmosphere of their time so much more faithfully and succinctly than any modern authors in treating of them. In this volume, therefore, we determined to encourage the Victorians, greater and smaller, to address us directly : and speak to us they do, as will be seen, with no uncertain voice or faltering expression. Here we have the oracle, straight from the gaping mouth of the cavern that has since become a tomb, and interrupted by no uninvited remarks or modern cat-calls.

But when we actually approached the task we had set ourselves, we found that *Victoriana*, far, apparently, from being difficult to compile, was very deceptively easy. The hindrance which we encountered consisted in the very abundance and diversity of the material at our disposal. And, as we progressed, this looseness of substance seemed to us, again, to make *symposium* a more than ever fitting description of the collection we had in mind. The scope of the volume was manifest and immense, because the only requisite qualification of any particular item for inclusion in our pages was that it should seem to us significant of its age and remote enough from the standards of to-day to be diverting, while it was clear that the book must open, as it does open, with the honest, ringing tones of the Iron Duke, and close, as it does close, with an account of the death of Queen Victoria and its presumed effect on the world. Nevertheless, the first essential of the

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volume we had planned was that it should be a short book : and in consequence we were forced to harden our hearts and cut ruthlessly, or even eliminate entirely, many jewels of comparative wisdom.

In this way our miscellany slowly began to dictate its own method of being constructed, because, though some of the selections required one or two whole pages in which to unfold their full grace and to exhale their faint fragrance, yet, when one approached such a gem as Mr. Holman Hunt's utterance on page 53, it was clearly a shame, and lacking in artistry, to permit such a phrase to be buried in a thick, cloudy context, to be smothered under the weight of other, less burning words. For, just as the Japanese, that nation which, above all others, loves flowers, hold that to obtain the full effect out of any arrangement of them, never more than a single most carefully chosen blossom – so that out of the bunch of a hundred stems purchased, ninety-nine may have to be sacrificed to procure this solitary if surpassing excellence – should be allowed to stand in any one vase, never more than one vase be placed in a room, thus, too, this Mid-Victorian artist's confession had, for the sake of its own beauty and perfection, to be isolated, to lie alone and shine fiercely in its splendour.

So *Victoriana* began to shape itself. Similarly there faced us the question of how the extracts should be presented : and in the end we were led to distribute them in a rough chronological order rather than in relation to the topic with which they were concerned. This we deemed an advantage in that it both imparted an appearance of the utmost variety to the pages and, in addition, if they are read through quickly, underlines,

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much more efficaciously than if these were heavily emphasised by grouping, the tendencies exemplified. Further, the mind of the reader is allowed free play, refers back of its own accord to other selections, detects, all undirected, a link or notices, of itself, a contrast between them, and by the power of allusion thus bestowed upon it gains without doubt the more edification.

But, to return to the examination of the content rather than the manner of this volume, it seemed to us that prejudice was a very healthy quality, and one never more needed than at the present tolerant moment. It does not so much matter in what the prejudices consist. One should always be prepared to alter them, or to exchange them with the enemy at half-time, but it is vital never to abandon them altogether as a habit of mind. Therefore, if the first essential of this work was to be brief, its second was that it should be prejudiced, as prejudiced in its own way as any of the opinions it presents ; that, for instance, it should exhibit Ruskin and Carlyle, not at their wonderful best, but at their silly worst.

To own after this manner that our book is partisan is, naturally, to confess that many wise, true, and even heroic sayings have been omitted from it. Notwithstanding this admission, it must not be assumed that, because we are prejudiced, we are trying to "poke fun at" the dead persons who rise to life once more in its pages. On the contrary, we declare ourselves extremely opposed to that kind of easy score, and are as a matter of fact, to be found very much on the side of real Great Victorians, the ones constantly attacked in their own day : the writers, painters, and scientists. As

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for those Great who were popular in their hour – the statesmen, the clergymen, and the generals – we quote them, without in any way voicing our own judgment of them or their opinions, in order, as we have said, to represent various tendencies of the Victorian age in the words of some of its protagonists. Let their views stand as a warning to other generations ! All the same, many of the famous people who speak in *Victoriana* – always excepting Mr. Gladstone – hold their own. He stands revealed, it is true, for that which he was : an austere and formidable machine, a kindly master of intolerable platitude, with a genius for finding the inevitable phrases in which to clothe the most banal thoughts, albeit his sentiments were invariably expressed with an appearance of pompous sincerity that seems now to have been imbued with an underlying and perhaps unconscious hypocrisy.

Of Lord Beaconsfield, on the other hand, there is nothing at all in these pages, for almost everything he said or wrote contained, under his genius for words, an enormous residue of wit and wisdom (an uncommon attribute, then as now, for a statesman). Moreover, his words convey meaning to other generations besides his own, and thereby betray their lack of our requisite quality : *Victorian* wisdom. But then, though Disraeli was undoubtedly the first to recognise his own greatness – in fact, “discovered” himself – he was never, we imagine, quite so positive about his goodness : certainly he was less often mistaken than most of his contemporaries. Ruskin, again, who frequently appears, always issues out of the ordeal with a certain glory, for, however absurd we consider his doctrines (and only his most ridiculous ones figure here), however much we

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may regret that his senses of religion and art should have grown together, so despairingly entangled, yet he possessed both ideas and ideals, and was ever willing to fight for them with vigour, altruism, and inspiration. Queen Victoria herself, too, invariably proves herself a woman of deep, if limited, feeling and of indomitable character. Every sentence she pens, every utterance she makes, is permeated by a personal style, sincere and courageous. The judicious reader will note in all her written works her mastery of the arts of emphasis and italicisation, for though she invariably underlines the wrong word, the word that does not need it, yet in spite of this, her meaning is through it made clearer.

Some critics, it may be, will urge, and with reason, that we have made no mention of the valuable Victorian contributions to science, literature, and art : but at least we have been able to indicate that, though there existed during that long reign a number of geniuses, yet, as our readers will see for themselves, they were as a rule extremely ill-received, and therefore, by the treatment accorded to them, can scarcely be accepted as, and would seldom have claimed to be, typical representatives of their day. Darwin, Rossetti, Tennyson, Meredith, Swinburne, George Eliot, the Brontës, Whistler, Hardy, and Henry James are some of the really great names of the epoch : but all of them were extremely unpopular at one time or another with a very large section even of that small minority which was acquainted with their work. It seems unreasonable, and unfair, withal, that the distinguished persons we have enumerated above, and their like, should now be claimed as "the glory of their

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age." They were nothing of the kind. They were its shame and burden, or as such their age condemned them and never scrupled to tell them so. . . . But, then, it may be argued that the great spirits of one generation always belong to the next : in which, of course, it is the very admirers, ardent if unpunctual, of those formerly despised and now overrated, who, in their loyalty and natural tendency to be late, triumphantly refuse acknowledgment to their successors. Thus, to examine the history of painting, those amateurs, who, long after they should have supported, let us say, Turner or Constable, Ingres or Delacroix, suddenly woke to their merits - probably after the artists were dead - boasting of this conversion as though it were a token of genius in themselves, instead of an overdue admission of their own incapacity and insensitiveness in not recognising before such transcendent worth, are as a rule precisely those who were, later, loudest in their denunciation of Manet and Renoir: while the belated adherents of those painters remain to the present day denying with a ferocious senility the canvases of Cézanne and Seurat.

Let us now scrutinise the contemporary judgments on the Victorian poets, written by the identical sort of person who at the present day praises them with fanatical enthusiasm to the exclusion of all other poetry. It must be remembered, too, that these opinions belong to the time of the best work of the authors they proscribe : for, contrary to public opinion, which holds that poets should either die at twenty, or, if that is not practicable, live to be ninety years of age (it being then understood, of course, that their octogenarian verse is their best) poets usually achieve their most

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valuable work between the ages of twenty-five and fifty. The reader, then, will notice that the spiritual predecessors of those who laud them to-day were, at this period, complaining that Tennyson was obscure, lacked wisdom and common sense, and advocated immorality ; that Swinburne “revealed to the world a mind aflame with the carnality of a schoolboy” ; that Walt Whitman’s poetry was only remarkable for “its absurd extravagance and shameless obscenity” ; and that George Meredith’s “Modern Love” ought to have been entitled “Modern Lust.” In recompense, however, Longfellow and Alfred Austin were hailed as writers of genius.

In prose and painting, the same tale is unfolded. Charlotte Brontë was, to choose a few names at random, “Chartist” and “anti-Christian” ; poor old Wilkie Collins was found to “revolt every human sentiment” ; Thomas Hardy was “disagreeable” and his work “ridiculous” ; the Pre-Raphaelites were discovered to be possessed by ambition that “is an unhealthy thirst which seeks notoriety by means of mere conceit” ; and, it is recorded, Whistler did not paint like a gentleman—a true criticism for once, and the very reason why he is remembered when Burne-Jones, who painted all too much like a gentleman except when he painted like a lady, is nigh forgotten.

Incidentally, it may be of interest to observe that out of all these massacres the only survivors to 1930 are that exquisite writer, Mr. George Moore, and that exquisite artist, Mr. Wilson Steer. Of him, now a pride of English painting, it was recorded in the year 1899—in a criticism of the Impressionists which,

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earlier, contains the hopeful words “Manet was a painter wholly devoid of colour-sense” – “Mr. P. Wilson Steer is the most extravagant of all. His landscapes are simply and crudely horrid.”

These extracts we quote are from the newspapers of the time : many of which continue publication to this day and, we hope, may trouble to review *Victoriana*. Thus we are in their hands. But so quaint and vigorous, so removed from present-day opinions are those set forth, so violent the expression of them, that we trust their successors will enjoy reading them as much as we do ourselves, and without experiencing any sense of former responsibility. We can assure them that we have disinterred such fragments of reviews as are reproduced here, not from malice, nor with intention, even, of suggesting the advisability of caution in judgment, but only to show how mistaken orthodox and respected opinion can be : nor, we ask them to recollect, do we for a moment attempt to deny that in innumerable other instances these very pages discerned accurately the virtues and faults of the work they were reviewing : while, indeed, the very fact of a criticism being sensible would preclude its appearing in this volume, the aim of which is the humble one of entertainment. At the same time perhaps, the reader will, at first be surprised to observe that it is precisely those journals professionally concerned with art and literature to the exclusion of politics, news, or sport, which are the most frequently and the most mordaciously wrong in their verdicts : but, as he ponders the question, he will doubtless supply himself with the charitable explanation that since they devoted more space, more often, to these subjects than did other papers,

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they were provided with more space in which, and more occasions on which, to blunder.

It is difficult, nevertheless, to bear any malice against these critics, misleading and misled as they were, except in the great and good instance of John Morley. He should have known better. But his vile and disgusting attack on Swinburne was forgiven, I believe, by the poet himself ; whom, moreover, Time has revenged. Already – and how much more will it be so in the future – Swinburne is read and remembered by a generation that never saw him, while John Morley, an oracle of great influence in his time, lives but as a dull sound at the back of the mind, or, it may be, is recalled suddenly, and with repugnance, as the author of calumnies upon a great poet.

O. S.

FORMENTOR.

Theme to be illustrated

“It is true that good and great men
may be mistaken.”

(*From “Gleanings” by the Right Honourable
W. E. Gladstone.*)

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON ON THE BALLOT

What distinguishes us from other countries is the universal publicity of our conduct, and the open avowal of our sentiments to all mankind ; and I should be exceedingly sorry to find men, instead of standing forward openly, and stating their opinions in the face of day, proceeding in a sneaking course, and exercising their elective franchise under a secret mode of voting.

(1840.)

“ THE GLOBE ” ON
CHINA

The Chinese government can never be dealt with in the way of negotiation. It must be displaced, and a more reasonable government established in its room. China must be ruled by a Sovereign who feels that he owes his throne to the ascendancy of Britain ; and this event is not very far off.

(1840.)

BISHOP WILBERFORCE ON
UNION WITH ROME

I confess I feel furious at the craving of men for union with idolatrous, material, sensual, domineering Rome, and their squeamish anathematising hatred of Protestant Reformed men.

(1842.)

“THE SPECTATOR” ON
BERLIOZ

Berlioz is one of those who have discovered the analogy between wigs and counterpoint, mustachios and melody, long hair and poetical genius, which he and his school illustrate so contradictorily. . . . It is his ambition to puzzle the orthodox, and the violence of their opposition only the more firmly rivets his self-confidence. . . . It is time that the middle-aged youth of France should see more into the essence of things.

(1843.)

LORD PALMERSTON ON OUR FOREIGN POLICY

Influence abroad is to be maintained only by the operation of one or other of two principles – hope and fear.

We ought to teach the weaker Powers to hope that they will receive the support of this country in their time of danger. Powerful countries should be taught to fear that they will be resisted by England in any unjust acts either towards ourselves or towards those who are bound in ties of amity with us.

(1844.)

ROEBUCK (A MANUFACTURER) ON THE TEN HOURS' BILL

The labourers of the manufacturing population are better off in every particular than any other class of labourer in the country. . . . Labour in factories is indoor work, warm and comfortable, and all that is required is continuous attention. . . . The machinery does all the hard work. . . . Medical men declare that women in factories bear the factory labour best and that it is suitable to their physical and physiological development. . . . They are of the opinion that they are a far better race for the propagation of the species than any other class of labourer. . . .

Who lifted this country from the abyss of destruction in the wars with Napoleon? – the manufacturing capitalists of the country. It is the power of this community which elevates us over every other country on the face of the earth. I ask the House if it will, under such impulse of feeling, interfere with all that has made us so great in the world?

(1844.)

SIR CHARLES NAPIER

The moral effect of this expedition¹ has been to spread a wholesome respect for our armies among the neighbouring nations, who, seeing that tribes so warlike and honoured among them have been broken to pieces without daring to fight a battle even when posted in the celebrated fastness of Truckee, will form a just idea of the British power. Indeed, I have already received within the last few days letters from neighbouring tribes, asking me to attach their territory to Scinde to be under British rule. . . .

The chiefs and their tribes who held out have been deservedly plundered by the troops which I had despatched in all directions to intercept their retreat with their baggage, cattle, and household furniture ; almost everything has been taken, except what was in the possession of their women and children.

¹In 1845, Sir Charles Napier led an expedition against the mountain desert tribes to the north of Scinde. The above is an extract from his despatch at the conclusion of hostilities.

“ THE QUARTERLY REVIEW ” ON
“ JANE EYRE ”

Jane Eyre is throughout the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit. . . . It pleased God to make her an orphan, friendless and penniless – yet she thanks nobody, and least of all Him, for the food and raiment, the friends, companions, and instructors of her helpless youth. On the contrary, she looks upon all that has been done for her not only as her undoubted right, but as falling far short of it. . . .

Altogether the autobiography of Jane Eyre is pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition. There is throughout it a murmuring against the comforts of the rich and against the privations of the poor, which is a murmuring of God’s appointment – there is a proud and perpetual assertion of the rights of man, for which we find no authority in God’s Word or in God’s providence. . . . We do not hesitate to say that the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown and violated every code human and divine abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home, is the same which has also written *Jane Eyre*.

(1848.)

CARLYLE ON
REVENGE

Revenge, and the natural hatred of scoundrels, and the ineradicable tendency to *revancher* oneself upon them and pay them what they have merited : this is forevermore intrinsically a correct and even a divine feeling in the mind of every man. [This feeling] is manlike, and even godlike — a monition sent to every man by the Maker himself.

(1850.)

“ THE ATHENÆUM ” ON THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

We have already . . . come into contact with the doings of a school of artists whose younger members unconsciously write its condemnation in the very title which they adopt (that of Pre-Raphaelite), and we would not have troubled ourselves or our readers with any further remarks on the subject were it not that eccentricities of any kind have a sort of seduction for minds that are intellectual without belonging to the better orders of intellect.

It is difficult in the present day of improved taste and information to apprehend any large worship of an Art Idol set up with visible deformity as its attributes, but it is always well to guard against the influence of ostentatious example and fascination of paradox. . . . This school of English youths has ambition . . . but their ambition is an unhealthy thirst which seeks notoriety by means of mere conceit. Abruptness, singularity, uncouthness are the counters by which they play for game. Their trick is to defy the principles of beauty and the recognised axioms of taste.

Again these young painters are mistaken if they imagine that they have reverted to *any* early period of art for their type of pictorial expression. . . . In all these painters the absence of structural knowledge never resulted in positive deformity. The disgusting incidents of unwashed

bodies were not presented in loathsome reality, and flesh with its accidents of putridity was not made the affected medium of religious sentiment in tasteless revelation. . . .

Let us conjure these young gentlemen to believe that Raphael may be received as no mean authority for soundness of view and excellence in practice. They stand convicted in insincerity by the very cleverness of some of their pictures. What a wilful misapplication of powers is that which affects to treat the human form in the primitive and artless manner of the Middle Ages, while minor accessories are elaborated to a refinement of imitation which belongs to the latest days of executive art !

(1850.)

BISHOP WILBERFORCE ON
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

All I see abroad makes me more bless God for our Church. Throughout all the Reformed countries I have seen, religion is gone. In the Romanist countries there is a great appearance of devoutness in worship, but marred with that miserable superstition ! What image worship ! What blind belief in a priest massing for them ! What an absence of God's Word ! How great has been His goodness in preserving to us alone, so completely, in our Reformation, the Catholic element !

(1851.)

“ THE TIMES ” ON
TENNYSON’S “ IN MEMORIAM ”

Another fault is not peculiar to *In Memoriam* ; it runs all through Mr. Tennyson’s poetry – we allude to his *obscurity*. . . . Mr. Tennyson frequently allows his amplitude of coloured and stately phrases to seduce him into line after line of grand sounding dactyls and spondees, out of which it is extremely hard to draw any message of wisdom or utterance of common sense.

(1851.)

RUSKIN'S MORALISTIC THEORY OF ART

All right human song is the finished expression, by art, of the joy or grief of noble persons for right causes. And accurately in proportion to the rightness of the cause, and purity of the emotion is the possibility of the fine art. . . . And with absolute precision from highest to lowest, the fineness of the possible art is an index of the moral purity and majesty of the emotion it expresses. . . .

You must be good men, before you can either paint or sing, and then the colour and sound will complete in you all that is best.

FROM SPEECHES ON
NO POPERY

I am sorry to say that in my own county there are several convents. Some years ago, a nun escaped, or attempted to escape, from one of them, but was taken back. Nothing further was known of her fate ; but this is well known, that within a week fifteen stanchions were put in the windows of the convent, and that it is now as complete a prison as any in the county of Warwick. The people who are immured in these places moulder and die.

(*C. N. Newdegate in the House of Commons, 1851.*)

How can a poor young lady who is locked up, where she may be either starved or whipped to death, that the priests may clutch her money, ask for protection ? I assert that nunneries are prisons, and I have seen them so used. They have ever been either prisons or brothels.

(*Henry Drummond, M.P., 1851.*)

RUSKIN ON
THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH IN ART

I shall pay no regard whatever to what may be thought beautiful, or sublime, or imaginative. I shall look only for true, bare, clear, downright statement of facts ; showing in each particular as far as I am able what truth of nature is, and then seeking for the plain expression of it and for that alone.

LORD PALMERSTON ON
ENGLAND'S GREATNESS

Those who desire to see the principles of liberty thrive and extend through the world, should cherish, with an almost religious veneration, the prosperity and greatness of England.

(1851.)

ROEBUCK ON
THE ANNIHILATION OF NATIVE
POPULATIONS

We have no business in Kaffraria, except on the understanding that we are going to plant there a people of higher intelligence, and this can only be done by the gradual annihilation of the native population.

It is an utter pretence to talk of humanity, and the principles of the Christian religion, and the Decalogue ; the black man must vanish in the face of the white.

(1851.)

This attitude, though many people may not believe me, continues to the present day. A relative of mine was taken to see the rector of a village in Yorkshire, who had been a great deal in the Colonies. He said to her, pointing at a large shelf on the wall, covered with skulls, "Those are all beasts I shot myself." In the centre of them was a human skull.

My relative was so horrified that she some days afterward mentioned this circumstance to a neighbour at dinner. The neighbour, who was the daughter of a former Conservative Minister, showed not the least surprise, but explained at once, "Oh, I suppose it was a native." O. S

RUSKIN ON
THE PAINTER VANDEVELDE

It is not easily understood, considering how many there are who love the sea, and look at it, that Vandervelde and such others should be tolerated. I feel utterly hopeless in addressing the admirers of these men, because I do not know what it is in their works which is supposed to be like nature.

“THE SPECTATOR” ON
GEORGE SAND AND MRS. BROWNING

One [of Mrs. Browning's sonnets] addressed to George Sand pleases us from the fact that, coming from a strictly religious Englishwoman, who is, we believe, a member of a Dissenting Church, it is a remarkable proof both of Mrs. Browning's largeness of tolerant sympathy, and in some degree of the advances we are making in Christian charity.

(1851.)

RUSKIN ON
HOBBEMA AS COMPARED TO TURNER

A single dusty roll of Turner's brush is more truly expressive of the infinity of foliage than the niggling of Hobbema could have rendered his canvas if he had worked on it till doomsday.

DR. CUMMING AND MOSES

If there be in any instance contradiction between a clear text of the Bible, and a supposed fact or discovery made by the geologist, my inference, without hesitation, is that the geologist must have made a mistake, that Moses made none.

(1852.)

RUSKIN ON
TURNER

We have living with us, and painting for us, the greatest painter of *all* time ; a man with whose supremacy of power no intellect of past ages can be put in comparison for a moment.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON ON
THE CRIMEAN WAR

We do not draw the sword from any ambitious motive of our own, or from any punctilioous scruples of honour, nor even to redress the wrongs of an Asiatic empire whose power some suppose to be now tottering to its ruin ; but we are contending for the highest of all objects that we could pursue – for the independence of nations, the maintenance of treaties, and for the stability of that balance of power upon which our own preservation, and indeed civilisation itself, depends.

(*House of Commons, 1854.*)

“ THE SPECTATOR ” ON
CONTEMPORARY POETRY

Affectation, unintelligibility, conceit and rant were never more rife than now among aspirants for poetic honours. Howling idiotcy is rampant and loose upon our streets.

(1854.)

RUSKIN'S ADVICE TO YOUNG PAINTERS

From young artists nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bonâ fide imitation* of Nature. . . .

They should keep to quiet colours, greys and browns ; and, making the early works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be the object of emulation, should go to Nature in all single-ness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction, rejecting nothing, selecting no-thing, and scorning nothing ; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth.

RUSKIN ON
A DRAWING BY W. HOLMAN HUNT

Now this is as good as Titian or anybody else ever did. And if you can enjoy it you can enjoy Titian and all other good painters ; and if you can't see anything in *it*, you can't see anything in *them*, and it is all affectation and pretence to say that you care about them.

CARLYLE ON FREEDOM

Surely of all “ rights of man,” the right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, held in the true course by him, is the indisputablest. . . . If Freedom have any meaning, it means enjoyment of this right, wherein all other rights are enjoyed.

RUSKIN ON COMPOSITION

The questions the artist, therefore, has always to ask himself are – first, “ Is my whole right ? ” and secondly, “ Can my details be added to ? Is there a single space in the picture where I can crowd in another thought ? ”

W. HOLMAN HUNT ON
A PERSONAL IDIOSYNCRASY

I feel really frightened when I sit down to paint a flower.



RUSKIN ON
HOLMAN HUNT

Hunt's "Light of the World" is, I believe, the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power, which the world has yet produced.

“THE ATHENÆUM” ON
HOLMAN HUNT’S
“AWAKENING CONSCIENCE”

“The Awakening Conscience” represents a lady just risen from the piano, upon which lies a piece of music, and turning from a fast man who laughs fiendishly, looks at the spectator with pale face, staring eyes, and clenched teeth. Innocent and unenlightened spectators suppose it to represent a quarrel between a brother and sister ; it literally represents the momentary remorse of a kept mistress, whose thoughts of lost virtue, guilt, father, mother, and home have been roused by a chance strain of music. The sentiment is of the Ernest Maltravers School : to those who have an affinity for it, painful ; to those who have not, repulsive.

RUSKIN'S DEFENCE OF IT

No one possessing the slightest knowledge of expression could remain untouched by the countenance of the lost girl, rent from its beauty into sudden horror.

Even to the mere spectator a strange interest exalts the accessories of a scene in which he bears witness to human sorrow. There is not a single object in all that room, common, modern, vulgar, but it becomes tragical, if rightly read. The furniture, so carefully painted even to the last vein of the rosewood – is there nothing to be learnt from that terrible lustre of it, from its fatal newness ; nothing there that has the old thoughts of home upon it, or that is ever to become a part of home ? Those embossed books, vain and useless – they also new – marked with no happy wearing of beloved leaves ; the torn and dying bird upon the floor ; the gilded tapestry, with the fowls of the air feeding on the ripened corn ; the picture above the fireplace with its single drooping figure – the woman taken in adultery ; nay, the very hem of the poor girl's dress, which the painter has laboured so closely thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street ; and the fair garden flowers seen in the reflected sunshine of the mirror – these also have their language :

*Hope not to find delight in us, they say,
For we are spotless, Jessy – we are pure.*

I surely need not go on. Examine the whole range of the walls of the Academy ; nay, examine those of all our public and private galleries, and while pictures will be met with by the thousand which literally tempt to evil, by the thousand which are devoted to the meanest trivialities of incident or emotion, by the thousand to the delicate fancies of inactive religion, there will not be found one powerful as this to meet full in the front the moral evil of the age in which it is painted, to waken into mercy the cruel thoughtlessness of youth, and subdue the severities of judgment into the sanctity of compassion.

From a Letter to “The Times,” 1854.

CARLYLE ON
WORK

There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness in Work.

FROM CONTEMPORARY BOOKS
OF MANNERS

A lady never looks worse than when gnawing a bone. Nothing should be sucked or gnawed in public.

From "How to Dine."

Never use both hands to carry anything to your mouth. Never be seen to pick your teeth. Wipe your nose, if needful, but never blow it at table. If you must spit, leave the room.

The practice of rinsing the mouth with water from your goblet, and spitting it into the finger glass, is more suited to the privacy of your toilette than to a dinner-table.

It requires some expertness and practice for a man with a moustache to take soup in a perfectly inoffensive manner. The accomplishment is worth some trouble.

From a Manners Book (1855).

THE EARL OF CARNARVON ON
CHINA

In China, which already employs beneficially between thirty and forty millions of our commercial capital, a gigantic empire is crumbling away, to give fuller and freer scope to Anglo-Saxon energy and enterprise.

(1854.)

RUSKIN ON
A PICTURE BY LANDSEER

Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of reproducing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the thing by which his thoughts are to be expressed. . . .

Speaking with strict propriety, therefore, we should call a man a great painter only as he excelled in precision and force in the language of lines, and a great versifier, as he excelled in precision or force in the language of words. A great poet would be a term strictly, and in precisely the same sense applicable to both, if warranted by the character of the images or thoughts which each in their respective language conveyed.

Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the words as synonymous) which modern times have seen :—the “Old Shepherd’s chief mourner.” Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright, sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog’s

breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life – how unwatched the departure of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep ; – these are all thoughts – thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from the hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the Man of Mind.

SIR JOHN MILLAIS ON ART

I am emphatically of opinion that the best art of modern times is as good as any of its kind that has gone before, and furthermore, that the best art of England can hold its own against the world. . . .

The only way to judge of the treasures which the Old Masters have left us is to look at the work and ask oneself, “What was that like when it was new?” The Elgin Marbles are by common consent held to be the perfection of art. But how much of our feeling of reverence is inspired by Time? . . .

Time and Varnish are two of the greatest of Old Masters and their merits and virtues are too often attributed by critics to the painters of the pictures they have toned and mellowed.

A hundred years hence, when Time has done its work, our English school of painting will receive the approval of posterity. . . . Art has moved with the age, not only in the matter of its subject and the spirit which pervades it, but also in knowledge and technical skill. If you place a first-class Rembrandt, a first-class Reynolds and, say, a first-class latter-day example side by side . . . making due allowances for the effects of Time, and, of course, for the different styles and temperaments of the painters – you will find little cause to bewail the “decadence of art.”

RUSKIN ON CANALETTO

The mannerism of Canaletto is the most degraded that I know in the whole range of art. Professing the most servile and mindless imitation, it imitates nothing but the blackness of the shadows ; it gives no one single architectural ornament, however near, so much form as might enable us even to guess at its actual one ; and this I say not rashly, for I shall prove it by placing portions of detail accurately copied from Canaletto side by side with engravings from the daguerreotype ; it gives the buildings neither their architectural beauty nor their ancestral dignity, for there is no texture of stone nor character of age in Canaletto's touch ; which is invariably a violent, black sharp ruled penmanlike line, as far removed from the grace of nature as from her faintness and transparency ; and for his truth of colour, let the single fact of his having omitted *all record, whatever, of the frescoes* whose wrecks are still to be found at least on one half of the un-restored palaces, and, with still less excusableness, all record of the magnificent coloured marbles many of whose greens and purples are still undimmed upon the Casa Dario, Casa Trevisan, and multitudes besides, speak for him in this respect....

Canaletto possesses no virtue except that of dexterous imitation of commonplace light and shade, and perhaps, with the exception of

Salvator, no artist has ever fettered his unfortunate admirers more securely from all healthy or vigorous perception of truth, or been of more general detriment to all subsequent schools.

BISHOP WILBERFORCE, AGAIN

Everything Romish stinks in my nostrils.

(1857.)

FROM A SPEECH ON
THE REMOVAL OF JEWISH DISABILITIES

A Jew is a man repudiating HIM, who is the central point of the whole Christian Revelation, and declaring HIM to be an impostor. A Jew must, therefore, in the whole tone of his thoughts, and in the whole series of his principles, be so at variance with the principles and tone of thought of a Christian community, that he cannot safely be trusted with the discretionary power of making laws for that Christian community.

(*House of Commons, 1858.*)

“THE QUARTERLY REVIEW” ON
“THE IDYLLS OF THE KING”

The chastity and moral elevation of this volume (*The Idylls of the King*), its essential and profound though not didactic Christianity, are such as perhaps cannot be matched throughout the circle of English literature in conjunction with an equal power. . . . He has had to tread upon ground which must have been slippery for any foot but his. We are far from knowing that either Lancelot or Guinevere would have been safe even for mature readers, were it not for the instinctive purity of his mind and the high skill of his management. . . .

The treatment of Enid by her husband has appeared to some of Mr. Tennyson's readers to be unnatural. It is no doubt both in itself repulsive, and foreign to our age and country. But the brutal element in man, which now only invades the conjugal relation in cases where it is highly concentrated, was then far more widely diffused, and not yet dissociated from alternations and even habits of attachment. Something of what we call Eastern manners at one time marked the treatment even of the woman of the West. Unnatural means contrary to nature, irrespectively of time and place; but time and place explain and warrant the treatment of Enid by Geraint.

(1859.)

GLADSTONE ON
BRITISH CHARACTER

The defects of British character – and I do not under-estimate them – lie, in my opinion, on the surface ; the root and heart of it are not only great but good.

RUSKIN ON
THE READING OF NOVELS

With respect to the sore temptation of novel reading, it is not the badness of a novel that we should dread, so much as its overwrought interest. . . . The best romance becomes dangerous, if, by its excitement, it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for useless acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called upon to act.

BISHOP WILBERFORCE ON
DARWIN'S "ORIGIN OF SPECIES"

Mr. Darwin writes as a Christian, and we doubt not that he is one. We do not for a moment believe him to be one of those who retain in some corner of their hearts a secret unbelief which they dare not give vent ; and we therefore pray him to consider well the grounds on which we brand his speculations with the charge of such a tendency.

First, then, he not obscurely declares that he applies his scheme of the action of the principle of natural selection to MAN himself, as well as to the animals around him. Now, we must say at once, and openly, that such a notion is absolutely incompatible not only with single expressions in the word of God on that subject of natural science with which it is not immediately concerned, but, which in our judgment is of far more importance, with the whole moral and spiritual condition of man which is its proper subject-matter. Man's derived supremacy over the earth ; man's power of articulate speech ; man's gift of reason ; man's free-will and responsibility ; man's faith and man's redemption ; the incarnation of the Eternal Son, the indwelling of the Eternal Spirit – all are equally and utterly irreconcilable with the degrading notion of the brute origin of him who was created in the image of God, and redeemed by the Eternal Son assuming to himself his nature. . . .

We think that the real temper of this whole speculation as to nature itself may be read in these few lines. It is a dishonouring view of nature.

That reverence for the work of God's hand with which a true belief in the All-wise Worker fills the believer's heart is at the root of all great physical discovery ; it is the basis of philosophy. He who would see the venerable features of Nature must not seek with the rudeness of a licensed roysterer violently to unmask her countenance ; but must wait as a learner for her willing unveiling.

(1860.)

RUSKIN ON
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

[The heroes of Le Sage and Smollett] are simply beasts endowed with some degree of human intellect ; cunning, false, passionate, reckless, ungrateful, and abominable, incapable of noble joy, of noble sorrow, of any spiritual perception or hope. I said “ beasts with human intellect ” ; but neither Gil Blas nor Roderick Random reach, morally, anything near the level of dogs.

“THE QUARTERLY REVIEW” ON
GEORGE ELIOT

No one who has looked at all into our late fictitious literature can have failed to be struck with the fondness of many of the writers of the day for subjects which at an earlier time would not have been thought of, or would have been carefully avoided. The idea that fiction should contain something to soothe, to elevate, or to purify seems to be extinct. In its stead there is a love for exploring what would be better left in obscurity ; for portraying the wildness of passion and the harrowing miseries of mental conflict ; for dark pictures of sin and remorse and punishment ; for the discussion of questions which it is painful and revolting to think on.

By some writers such themes are treated with a power which fascinates even those who most disapprove the manner in which it is exercised ; by others with a feebleness which shows that the infection has spread even to the most incapable of the contributors to our circulating libraries. To us the influence of the “Jack Sheppard” school of literature is really far less alarming than that of a class of books which is more likely to find its way into the circle of cultivated readers, and, most especially, to familiarize the minds of our young women in the middle and higher ranks of life with matters on which their fathers and brothers would never venture to speak in their presence.

It is really frightful to think of the interest which we have ourselves heard such readers express in criminals like Paul Ferroll, and in sensual ruffians like Mr. Rochester : and there is much in the writings of "George Eliot" which, on like ground, we feel ourselves bound most earnestly to condemn. Let all honour be paid to those who in our time have laboured to search out and to make known such evils of our social condition as Christian sympathy may in some degree relieve or cure. But we do not believe that any good end is to be effected by visions which fill the mind with details of imaginary vice and distress and crime or which teach it – instead of endeavouring after the fulfilment of simple and ordinary duty – to aim at the assurance of superiority by creating for itself fanciful and incomprehensible perplexities. Rather we believe that the effect of such fictions must be to render those who fall under their influence unfit for practical exertion ; while they most assuredly do grievous harm in many cases, by intruding on minds which ought to be guarded from impurity the unnecessary knowledge of evil.

(1860.)

RUSKIN ON
WAR

I believe that war is at present productive of good rather than of evil.

CARLYLE ON
SLAVERY AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

The Almighty Maker has appointed him [the negro] to be a Servant. Under penalty of Heaven's curse, neither party to this pre-appointment shall neglect or misdo his duties therein : and it is certain Servantship on the *nomadic* principle, at the rate of so many shillings per day, *cannot* be other than misdone.

Servantship, like all solid contracts between men (like wedlock itself, which was *once* nomadic enough, temporary enough !), must become a contract of permanency, not easy to dissolve, but difficult extremely, — a “contract for life” . . . will evidently be the best of all. . . .

And this was already the Nigger's essential position. Mischief, irregularities, injustices did probably abound between Nigger and Buckra ; but the poisonous taproot of all mischief, and impossibility of fairness, humanity, or well-conduct in the contract, never had been there ! . . . To me individually the Nigger's case was not the most pressing in the world, but among the least so ! America, however, . . . felt that in the Heavens or the Earth there was nothing so godlike or incomparably pressing to be done. Their energy, their valour, their etc. etc. were worthy of the stock they sprang from — and now, poor fellows, *done* it they have, with a witness. A continent of the earth has been submerged, for certain years, by deluges as from the Pit of

Hell ; half a million . . . of excellent White Men, full of gifts and faculty, have torn and slashed one another into horrid death, in a temporary humour, which will leave centuries of remembrance fierce enough : and three million absurd Blacks, men and brothers (of a sort), are completely “ emancipated ” ; launched into the career of improvement – likely to be “ improved off the face of the earth ” in a generation or two !

“ THE DAILY TELEGRAPH ” ON
THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT

Son of that noble Father ! Consort of the Princess of Albion ! Prince ! Wistfully thinking of the bitter anguish of a bride betrothed, your grief is England’s. Closer by blood and nearer by place, you mourn him with keener feeling than we may claim ; but he whom they bear along this nave with thrilling choral hymn and bursting sob, was our Head, also, our Friend and Counsellor !

If the people’s blood could have saved Her Majesty from the common anguish, it had not been wanting. But certain as the ebb and flow of the ocean which laves her summer palace are the vicissitudes of all life. Is it vain, then, being great, to be good – being highest, to be most dutiful ? Better taught by her God, by her heart, by her husband, by her children, is the Queen of England crowned with the widow’s weeds !

(*December 24th, 1861.*)

FROM QUEEN VICTORIA'S "JOURNAL OF
OUR LIFE IN THE HIGHLANDS"

Dr. Macleod expressed great admiration of my dearest Albert's statue (the cast of which was standing in the vestibule below). His eyes were full of tears, and he said his loss was felt more and more. I showed him a drawing of the mausoleum and he said, "Oh ! *he* is not there," which is so true ; and again, when admiring the photograph of the reclining statue by Marochetti, he added, "But I think *he* is more like the statue below," which is a beautiful and true idea. He looks so truly at the reality of the next life.

(*Sunday, August 24th, 1862.*)

Dr. Macleod was so kind and sympathising, so encouraging and full of *faith* and *hope* which *alone* can comfort and sustain the broken heart. In his sermon he spoke of there being *peace without happiness* and *happiness without peace*, which is so true.

(*Sunday, October 19th, 1862.*)

ROEBUCK ON
THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

I have lived to see America divided into two. . . . My present feeling is one of rejoicing. . . . An irresponsible people, possessed of irresponsible and almost omnipotent power, is a people that cannot be trusted. A divided America will be a benefit to England. I ask the Noble Lord [Palmerston]¹ whether the time has not come for him to be the first in Europe to ask the Great Powers to recognise the Southern Confederacy. . . . Let me tell you why. . . . The North will never be our friends. Of the South you can make friends. They are Englishmen ; they are not the scum and refuse of Europe. A hand held out from Europe would stay the great effusion of blood. . . . More than all, it would make happy the homes of many of our working men here.

(1862.)

¹ It was reported that Palmerston said of the speech from which the above is an extract that it was "a devilish good speech," and just his opinion, but he could not officially say so.

“ THE SPECTATOR ” ON
MEREDITH’S “ MODERN LOVE ”

Mr. George Meredith is a clever man, without literary genius, taste or judgment, and apparently aims at that sort of union of point, passion and pictorial audacity which Byron attained in “ *Don Juan*. ” . . . On the whole, the effect of the book on us is that of clever, meretricious, turbid pictures, by a man of some vigour, jaunty manners, quick observation, and some pictorial skill, who likes writing about naked human passions, but does not bring either original imaginative power or true sentiment to the task. . . .

Mr. George Meredith has a sense of what is graphic, but he never makes an excursion beyond that into what he intends for poetry without falling into some trick of false ornamentation. . . .

Mr. Meredith, too (though, so far as we can understand the drift of his *Modern Love*, we can accuse it of nothing worse than meddling causelessly, and somewhat pruriently, with a deep and painful subject on which he has no convictions to express), sometimes treats themes with a flippant levity that is exceedingly vulgar and unpleasant. . . . “ *Modern Lust* ” would be certainly a more accurate title. . . . Mr. Meredith evidently thinks mud picturesque as, indeed, it may be, but all picturesqueness is not poetry.

(1862.)

LORD PALMERSTON AT SHEFFIELD

Nothing can be more interesting than to see in these great seats of national industry men who by their energy, their intelligence, their integrity, have amassed large fortunes. . . . In the next place you see men still struggling in the same career – employed in the most honourable pursuit, the acquisition of what is not only wealth to them, but wealth, honour, and prosperity to their country. And not least of all is it gratifying to see those sturdy and honest working classes, the strength and stamina of the country—to see those specimens of the stubborn, manly, honourable Englishmen, the admiration of all who come among us. . . .

These are the results of our free institutions – the results of that general enlightenment which pervades all classes of the community.

(1862.)

HOW THE
PRINCE OF WALES (KING EDWARD VII)
GREETED HIS BRIDE

At last the gangway was run on shore, and in another moment the Prince might be seen hurrying along the deck of the *Victoria and Albert* towards the entrance of the saloon. At the same moment a young and graceful figure passed rapidly along the interior of the latter, and at the threshold His Royal Highness saluted, with the ardour of a lover, tempered by the respect of a gentleman, the lips of his intended bride. It was an honest English kiss, and the English people cheered it in a perfect paroxysm of approbation. . . . There is a verse of a forgotten drawing-room poet, which describes not inadequately the character in which assembled thousands accepted that royal kiss of welcome –

*Sweetest seal of soft affection,
Tenderest pledge of future bliss ;
Dearest tie of young connection,
Love's first snowdrop-virgin kiss.*

(*From a newspaper, 1863.*)

MORE ABOUT MOSES.
“THE EDINBURGH REVIEW” ON
BISHOP COLENSO’S BOOK ON THE
PENTATEUCH

We would entreat those who have not made theology their study above all to avoid this book ; and to rest assured that very much of it admits of decisive refutation, whilst the remainder is far outweighed by the irrefragable testimony and the solid and manifold argument adducible to evince the actual matter-of-fact truthfulness of Moses.

(1863.)

RUSKIN ON
MICHAEL ANGELO

Michael Angelo's ostentatious display of strength and science has a natural attraction for comparatively weak and pedantic persons.

Nearly every existing work by Michael Angelo is an attempt to execute something beyond his power, coupled with a feverish desire that his power may be acknowledged.

“THE DAILY TELEGRAPH” ON
THE WEDDING OF THE PRINCE OF WALES
(KING EDWARD VII)

He came at last, young, gallant, confident, with a noble bearing, and an upright mien, walking with the assured tread of one who knew himself to be *porphyrogenitus*, yet bowing his comely head from side to side gracefully to those who rose to do him homage. This was the Prince of Wales. It is a wonder that the people did not leap up at him, or cast their garments upon him, as the Athenians did of old to their favourites, or at least shout themselves hoarse with enthusiasm ; but they were a courtly throng, and the dazzling pageant swept by in almost breathless silence, and then a low murmur of approval and of devotion ran through the refined assembly.

It was admitted on all sides that he looked handsome and dignified, and that his face beamed with intelligence. The dress he wore enhanced the charm of his manner, and seemed to add height to his stature. He was clothed in the robes of the Order of the Garter, and in that gorgeous panoply, the general’s uniform beneath, and a hat heavy with plumes in his hand, he looked from top to toe the favourite of fortune and the idol of his countrymen ; who one day, please God, is to be Edward VII, King of England, and who, we humbly pray, may prove fully worthy of his amazing felicity and the priceless inheritance of a great people’s love.

(1863.)

“ THE TIMES ” ON
SLAVERY

In the New Testament, we have an epistle written by the man who represents the last revealed phase and development of the Gospel, sent by the hand of a runaway slave, who had sought refuge with the writer, to his lawful master, to the purport that the master and his slave were to get on better, and do their duty to one another more thoroughly for the future. The same writer tells his recent converts that if they are slaves they must make the best of that condition, and not try to escape it, at least by any means contrary to the laws of the country. The only possible doubt about the exact meaning of his advice is whether slaves are to refuse their liberty, even if it be offered ; or whether they are to remain true to their masters, even if chance presents the opportunity of escape. The context which says that a faithful and dutiful Christian slave becomes the freedman of his Heavenly Master, clearly proves that a slave who refuses the offer of freedom has a high scriptural argument for his choice. If it be said that slavery is at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, so also are a good many things which are not yet under the ban of abolition, or threatened with a “ War-power.”

(1863).

**" THE QUARTERLY REVIEW " ON
INDIA**

We consider it certain that the interests of the inhabitants of India can in no way be more effectually promoted than by the judicious application of British skill and money, under a government knowing how to rule all classes in a spirit of friendly confidence without fear or favour.

(1863.)

QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE
KING OF THE BELGIANS

A married daughter I must have living with me, and must *not* be left constantly to look about for help, and to have to make shift for the day, which is too dreadful. I intend (and she wishes it herself) to look out in a year or two (for till nineteen or twenty I don't intend *she* should marry) for a young, sensible Prince, for Lenchen¹ to marry, who can during my *lifetime* make my house his *principal* home. A sufficient fortune to live independently if I died, and plenty of good sense and high moral worth are the only necessary requisites. He need not belong to a reigning house.

(1863.)

¹ Princess Helena, afterwards Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein.

“ THE SPECTATOR ” ON
ART

The very word Art has a suspicion of humbug about it. What right has the art of painting, or building, or making objects beautiful, to be called Art, *par excellence*, any more than the art of making shoes? A picture at best can only represent faithfully the scene or incident to which it refers, and anyone can judge of it who has a good eye and knows the story.

(1864.)

“THE ATHENÆUM” ON
“ENOCH ARDEN”

What are we to gain by putting such facts before the public mind? Are the poets and novelists bent on preparing the way for the introduction of polyandry? Are the young ladies of a coming age to be trained in a complaisant belief that it is rather a poetical incident than a dark and shameful misery to have two husbands living at one time? If not, why all this prostitution of art?

Enoch, on his return home, could not stand off from his wife and children, leaving them in another man's house, without a positive fraud, a criminal collusion. For the sake of everyone's purity of soul, it would have been better for him to have stopped it at once by announcing his return. That he should be represented as acting a heroic part in skulking by, in dodging about the pothouse and the port, in living a daily lie in the face of men, is one of the mysteries of a morbid epoch.

(1864.)

WALTER BAGEHOT TO
MISS EMILY DAVIES¹

I assure you I am not “an enemy of women.” I am very favourable to their employment as *labourers* or in any other *menial* capacity. I have, however, doubts as to the likelihood of their succeeding in business as capitalists. I am sure the nerves of most women would break down under the anxiety and that most of them are utterly destitute of the disciplined reticence and self-restraint necessary to every sort of co-operation.

Two thousand years hence you may have changed it all, but the *present* woman will only flirt with men and quarrel with one another.

(1864.)

¹ From an unpublished letter.

“ PUNCH ” ON
SWINBURNE’S “ POEMS AND BALLADS ”

Having read Mr. Swinburne’s defence of his prurient poetics, *Punch* hereby gives him his royal licence to change his name to what is evidently its true form – SWINE-BORN.

(1866.)

GLADSTONE ON
ENGLISHMEN

Englishmen are in truth an imperial race. But they are not and cannot be faultless.

JOHN MORLEY ON
SWINBURNE'S "POEMS AND BALLADS"

Mr. Swinburne deserves credit for the audacious courage with which he has revealed to the world a mind all aflame with the feverish carnality of a schoolboy over the dirtiest passage in Lemprière. . . .

It is a very bad and silly thing to try to set up the pleasures of sense in the seat of the reason they have dethroned. And no language is too strong to condemn the mixed vileness and childishness of depicting the spurious passion of a putrescent imagination, the unnamed lusts of sated wantons, as if they were the crown of character and their enjoyment the great glory of human life. . . .

Perhaps if Mr. Swinburne can a second and a third time find a respectable publisher willing to issue a volume of the same stamp, crammed with pieces which many a professional vendor of filthy prints might blush to sell if he only knew what they meant, English readers will gradually acquire a truly delightful familiarity with these unspeakable foulnesses. . . .

We should be sorry to be guilty of anything so offensive to Mr. Swinburne as we are sure an appeal to the morality of all the wisest and best men would be. . . . Is purity to be expunged from the catalogue of desirable qualities? . . . Of enlarged *meditation*, the note of the highest

poetry, there is not a trace, there are too many signs that Mr. Swinburne is without any faculty in that direction.

(1866.)

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
“ THE IDYLLS OF THE KING ”

No pathos like that of the story of King Arthur harmonises so completely with all that is pathetic in our own times.

(1866.)

“THE SPECTATOR” ON
WILKIE COLLINS’S “ARMADALE”

The fact that there are characters such as he has drawn, and actions such as he has described, does not warrant his overstepping the limits of decency, and revolting every human sentiment. This is what *Armadale* does. It gives us for its heroine a woman fouler than the refuse of the streets, who has lived to the ripe age of 35, and through the horrors of forgery, murder, theft, bigamy, gaol and attempted suicide, without any trace being left on her beauty. . . .

[All this] is frankly told in a diary which, but for its unreality, would be simply loathsome, and which needs all the veneer of Mr. Wilkie Collins’s easy style and allusive sparkle to disguise its actual meaning.

(1866.)

“THE SPECTATOR” ON
SHELLEY

Shelley's poetry has a diseased element in it that crops up not unfrequently here and there, and there is a snaky horror and poison in his poetry, which mars the ensemble of a great poem.

(1866.)

MATTHEW ARNOLD DISCOVERS A LACK OF HUMOUR IN SHELLEY

All the personal charm of Shelley cannot hinder us from at last discovering in his poetry the incurable want of sound subject-matter and the incurable fault, in consequence, of unsubstantiality. . . .

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Let no one suppose that a want of humour and self-delusion such as Shelley's have no effect upon a man's poetry. The man Shelley is not entirely sane, and Shelley's poetry is not entirely sane either. In poetry, no less than in life, he is "a beautiful, and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."

QUEEN VICTORIA TO
EARL RUSSELL

The Queen *must say* that she does feel *very bitterly* the want of feeling of those who *ask* the Queen to go to open Parliament. That the public should wish to see her she fully understands, and has *no* wish to prevent – quite the contrary ; but why this wish should be of so *unreasonable* and unfeeling a nature, as to *long* to witness the spectacle of a poor, broken-hearted widow, nervous and shrinking, dragged in *deep mourning*, **ALONE in STATE** as a Show, where she used to go supported by her husband, to be gazed at, without delicacy of feeling, is a thing *she cannot* understand, and she never could wish her bitterest foe to be exposed to !

(1866.)

“ THE TIMES ” ON
LANDSEER’S LIONS

The lions [in Trafalgar Square] were uncovered yesterday afternoon, and we may say confidently that no street, no square, in this metropolis can boast of any finer work of art. Never before has the king of beasts been so nobly and so truthfully treated in sculpture, and it is difficult to know which to admire most, the vitality of this creation or its majesty. The animal seems to live – his mouth ready to pant, his flank to quiver, every muscle to be instinct with the possibility of action – the very tail, curled round by his side, to be waiting for the chance of lashing out. We but echo the general feeling of London this day when we express our pride in this [monument] being a national possession.

(1867.)

“ THE SPECTATOR ” ON
“ HIAWATHA ”

Mr. Longfellow's *Hiawatha* is one of the really permanent contributions to modern literature, and no other genius known to us would have been in any way equal to the work. It is not the grasp of imagination, so much as the grace and sweep of a peculiarly majestic *fancy* — a fancy like the impulsive fancy of children, yet with the self-contained dignity of men — which was needed for the task. . . .

How bright and playful is the picture of the familiarity of the lower animals with the little Indian prophet. . . . How admirable in their bright and simple outlines are the various companions of the Indian prophet's life ! But it is not only in the details, it is in the whole spirit of the poem — the fanciful joy and beauty, the equally fanciful weirdness and gloom — that we enjoy the touch of a master hand.

(1868.)

“ THE QUARTERLY REVIEW ” ON FEMALE EDUCATION

The one thing men do not like is the man-woman, and they will never believe the college, or university, woman is not of that type. Sensible men will always like sensible and cultivated women ; but they will always prefer that their good sense and cultivation should have come through channels which they recognise as suitable for the womanly character.

The learned woman does not make the best educator of children. The duties of women do not to any extent lie in the intellectual direction. Their sprightly intuition is often, in practical matters, worth far more than the reasoning faculty which a laborious education has developed in man. . . . The sphere of women is home. Such a cultivation as will make a really good wife, sister or daughter, to educated men, is the thing to be aimed at.

(1869.)

[SIR GILBERT SCOTT

[St. Pancras Station] is often spoken of to me as the finest building in London ; my own belief is that it is possibly *too good* for its purpose.

SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON ON
THE SALE OF ARMY COMMISSIONS

The purchase of commissions is the great security for the continued fidelity of those entrusted with the sword, for it confines their acquisition to the class which is influenced by the sentiments of honour.

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
BYRON

Had Lady Byron, in the interests of religion and morality, denounced her wretched husband – had she, in order to avert the baleful influence which his specious and debasing poetry was exercising over the minds of the susceptible – she would, in our judgment, have done a service to humanity. . . .

The name of Byron will be a hissing and a scorn to all generations.

(1869.)

“THE ATHENÆUM” ON
WAGNER

[Wagner] has more impudently satirized his predecessors than any one pretending to the name of musical artist has done before.

All who refuse to surrender themselves to the insanities of the hour must agree that the scanty and spare and stale melodic phrases which it [*Das Rheingold*] contains, foisted on the public by feeble and inflated efforts at orchestral intricacy, are complicated and worked to death with a persistency which, if found in an old master, would call forth an outpouring of the vials of vitriolic sarcasm by these new prophets and their fanatical congregations.

The vapidity and ungraciousness of the declamatory music will make itself most wearily felt by all who remember what Gluck and Weber could make of their dialogue.

Never was there such a storm in a slop-basin.
(1869.)

“THE ATHENÆUM” ON
J. S. MILL’S “SUBJECTION OF WOMEN”

The sex for which Mr. Mill does battle will hardly smile upon their knight. A few sad and thoughtful women may praise and love him, seeing the goodness of his work, and knowing how much it costs him in fame and power ; but the brighter portion of the sex will either laugh at his wise words or pass them by as idle wind.

All happy women are conservative in spirit ; and a great majority of women, it may be hoped, are happy in their lot. They think too much of men. In their eyes, a lover is a hero, a husband is a god. Female rights ! Such rights as they wish for, they have got ; for all desires of the female heart begin and end in love. A woman who has won her husband’s heart has gained the only prize on earth for which she cares. To her a vote is useless, seeing that she feels no separate interest and finds no independent light.

(1869.)

**GLADSTONE ON
ENGLAND'S POWER**

England rests her power, not upon physical force, but upon her principles, her intellect and virtue.

“ THE DAILY TELEGRAPH ” ON
THE ALBERT MEMORIAL

This Memorial is assuredly the most consummate and elegant piece of elegiac art which modern genius has produced. If we had dug up such massive pieces of fine thought and faithful toil in an Italian vineyard or on a Greek hill, the critics would not mistake them, perhaps, for the relics of the Periclean period ; but they would, if they had eyes, hail the grace, the spirit, the beauty and reality of them. The America is a poem of national progress in eloquent marble ; and the Africa, if Mr. Theed had cut it for Dido or Sophonisba, would have been gladly paid for at its weight in Mauritanian silver.

It is indeed a possession which ennobles the capital and which we may show to visitors from abroad. And they will not fail to admire and applaud it, above all, while they reflect that an age called money-seeking and idealess set up this exquisite and costly tabernacle of the Arts to the memory of one whose two chiefest glories were his perfect dutifulness in life, and in death the tears and the unchanging fidelity of his Widow. As long as it stands, the angels pointing downwards and pointing upwards will say aloud to all with “ears to hear” that the best road to Heaven goes by way of duty quietly done on earth ; while history will not forget to tell that it immortalises the unblemished troth of a true and virtuous husband and the love stronger than death of a perfect Wife.

(1872.)

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
“ FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD ”

Mr. Hardy has much to learn, or perhaps we ought to say, to unlearn before he can be placed in the first order of English novelists. Mr. Hardy disfigures his pages by bad writing, by clumsy and inelegant metaphors, and by mannerisms and affectations. . . . If Mr. Hardy is not possessed of genius, he is possessed of something quite good enough for the ordinary purposes of novel-writing to make him independent of anything like counterfeit originality or far-fetched modes of thought. If he has the self-control to throw aside his tendency to strain after metaphorical effects, he may mellow into a considerable novelist.

(1875.)

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
WALT WHITMAN

Walt Whitman is an American writer who some years back attracted attention by a volume of so-called poems which were chiefly remarkable for their absurd extravagance and shameless obscenity, and who has since, we are glad to say, been little heard of among decent people.

(1876.)

FROM QUEEN VICTORIA'S "JOURNAL OF
OUR LIFE IN THE HIGHLANDS"

Again this dear and blessed anniversary returns, and again without my beloved blessed One ! But he is ever with me in spirit.

When I came down to breakfast, I gave Beatrice a mounted photograph of our dear Mausoleum, and a silver belt of Montenegrin workmanship. After breakfast I gave my faithful Brown an oxidised silver biscuit-box, and some onyx studs. He was greatly pleased with the former, and the tears came to his eyes, and he said : " It is too much." God knows, it is not for one so devoted and faithful.

(*August 26th, 1878.*)

GLADSTONE ON
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

I may speak of the House of Commons as a school of discipline for those who enter it. In my opinion it is a school of extraordinary power and efficacy. It is a great and noble school for the creation of all the qualities of force, suppleness and versatility of intellect. And it is also a great moral school. It is a school of temper. It is also a school of patience. It is a school of honour, and it is a school of justice.

GLADSTONE ON
AN EGG-FLIP

When I have had very lengthened statements to make, I have used what is called an egg-flip – a glass of sherry beaten up with an egg. I think it excellent, but I have much more faith in the egg than in the alcohol.

(1878.)

THE ANNEXATION OF CYPRUS

“ I am commanded by Her Majesty’s Government to occupy the island of Cyprus in the name of the Queen,” said Admiral John Hay, in the presence of Samih Pasha and the officials and notables of the island. “ I shall require all taxes and contributions to the government revenue to be paid into the public treasury on behalf of the Queen, and I shall hold the officials responsible for all moneys due to the government.”

Afterwards the British flag was hoisted, the Admiral pronouncing the words, “ I take possession of this island in the name of Queen Victoria.” It is said that, upon hearing this well-known name, the assembled crowd shouted lustily, “ Live the British Queen,” and that they remained gazing at the flag till it was hauled down at sunset. The ease with which the Admiral went through all the formalities much impressed the Cypriotes. “ One would think,” remarked a native, “ that he had been accustomed to take possession of new territory all his life.” Thus quietly and easily was the old English process of annexation for the people’s good performed.

(“ *Annual Register*,” 1878.)

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
FEMALE SUFFRAGE

Throughout the civilised world the English Parliament would lose in consideration if even one woman sat in it.

The world has been so ordered that when things are at their best, men govern with wisdom and women obey with wisdom.

(1878.)

GLADSTONE ON HOLINESS

Men who are not holy, will believe themselves in many cases to be holy, and men who are holy, will in many cases believe themselves to be not holy.¹

¹ Compare this discovery with that communicated to Queen Victoria by Dr. Macleod; the last sentence on p. 80.

QUEEN VICTORIA ON
MILITARY PREPARATION

If we are to maintain our position as a *first-rate* power, we must, with our Indian Empire and large colonies, be *prepared* for attacks and *wars*, *somewhere* or *other*, **CONTINUALLY**. And the *true economy* will be to be always ready.

(1879.)

GLADSTONE ON
PROVERBS

Proverbs do not grow old, but seem, as a rule,
to keep their freshness through an unbounded
period.

(1879.)

GLADSTONE ON
PROGRESS

It is a time of rapid progress ; and rapid progress
is in itself a good.

(1879.)

“ THE NINETEENTH CENTURY ” ON WHISTLER

Art may be concerned alone with the arrangement of colour and line.¹

If it be Mr. Whistler's theory that which all the world of greatest artists has mistaken for mere means has been in very seriousness the end, then the aim of Art is immeasurably lowered – the interest of Humanity turns aside from it, and we must leave it alone to the materialism of its technical cleverness. . . . No longer, for such art as this, the bringing of it “ to a root in human passion or human hope.” Contented with decoration, it despairs an idea. And satisfied with the superficial triumph of an appeal to the eye, it does not even court courageously a failure in an appeal to the mind. . . . We have scarcely a need of protection against so arrant a delusion. We cannot accept the decorative in the place of the thoughtful: accept a successful pattern where association and sentiment have been: forego comedy and pathos, laughter and tears for a scientific adjustment of yellow and red. . . . We cannot excuse the boasted absence of the message. . . .

The originality of his painted work is somewhat apt to be dependent on the innocent error that confuses the beginning with the end . . . and exalts an adroit sketch into the rank of a permanent picture. . . . In the “ Nocturnes ” there is

¹ From *Art and Art Critics* by J. McN. Whistler.

an effect of harmonious decoration, so that a dozen or so of them on the upper panels of a lofty chamber would afford even to the wall-papers of William Morris a welcome and justifiable alternative. . . . They suffer cruelly when placed against work of patient achievement. . . .

In spite of his devotion to the art qualities of the peacock, it has not been given to Mr. Whistler to be quite indifferent to the race to which he belongs. . . . He has painted with admirable expressiveness a portrait of his mother, and has recorded on a doleful canvas the head and figure of Mr. Carlyle. . . . Not that the pictures are without mannerism – the straight and stiffish disposition of the lines in the first and the resolute abstinence from colour in both are in themselves not so much merits as peculiarities. But the sense of dignified rest and a certain sense of reticent pathos are apparent in the portrait of the lady – whether or not they were intended.

(1879.)

GLADSTONE

A solemn and overwhelming sense of duty, and that mixture of profound humility with a manly resolution, which such a sense best engenders and sustains – these are, we believe, the instruments by which the Divine Grace develops in the conduct of man, even amidst the most difficult passages of life, the principles of unchangeable justice.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL ON
OPIUM FOR CHINA

If the Chinese must be poisoned by opium, I would rather they were poisoned for the benefit of our Indian subjects than for the benefit of any other Exchequer.

(*House of Commons, 1880.*)

GLADSTONE AT THE OPENING OF THE HAWARDEN VILLAGE FLOWER SHOW

When you cultivate plants that grow from the ground, you cannot help thinking a little who HE is that makes that plant to grow.

“ THE DAILY TELEGRAPH ” ON
WHISTLER

If Mr. Whistler would leave off using mud and clay on his palette and paint cleanly, like a gentleman, we should be happy to bestow any amount of praise on him. But we must protest against his soiled and miry ways.

(1881.)

GLADSTONE

No wave on the great ocean of time, when once it
has floated past us, can be recalled.

(1881.)

GLADSTONE ON
THE RESOURCES OF CIVILISATION

If it shall appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland, between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness upon the other ; if the law, purged from defect and from any taint of injustice, is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society are to be set at naught, then I say, Gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted.

(1881.)

QUEEN VICTORIA TO
THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON

The Queen trusts that means will be found to prevent these dreadful Irish people from succeeding in their attempts to delay the passing of the important measures of Coercion.

(1881.)

FAWCETT ON
ENGLAND'S POLICY IN EGYPT

In the future settlement of Egypt, England has no selfish object to serve. Her chief concern must be to secure for the Egyptian people the very best government and the greatest amount of liberty.

(*House of Commons, 1882.*)

GLADSTONE ON
MAN

It seems to me that in every function of life, and in every combination with his fellow-creatures, for whatever purpose, the duties of man are limited only by his powers.

LORD SHERBROOKE ON
ENGLAND'S POLICY IN EGYPT

Our object is not to conquer or annex, but to
foster and control.

(1882.)

**“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
OPIUM FOR CHINA**

There is indubitable testimony to the wholesome effect of an occasional or regular opium pipe. It soothes the nerves, lessens coughs and consumptive tendencies ; and can be used medicinally in all kinds of unpleasant and hidden disorders.

If there is one thing clear in the whole controversy, it is that the authorities have no wish to put the cultivation down. Occasional requests for a high prohibitive duty on sea-borne opium are obviously dictated by the mere spirit of protection.

(1882.)

"THE QUARTERLY REVIEW" ON
HENRY JAMES

The Portrait of a Lady is one of the longest [novels] of recent times and there is not a single interesting incident in it from beginning to end. No one can possibly care, for a single moment, what becomes of any of the characters. The characters are described at enormous length by Mr. James ; then they describe themselves ; then they are described by the other characters. But nothing can relieve their inborn tediousness. Mr. James's descriptive writing is not remarkable for either grace or power and his conversations are not brilliant. . . . Open his pages where one may, and it will be found that the men and women are prosing on in the same hum-drum fashion, and with apparently only one definite object in view – that of providing as many pages as possible of printed matter.

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
MANET

Manet's native want of originality, even in his manner of adapting the thoughts of other men, is painfully apparent. A nervous irritability of temperament prevented him from carrying out any work which he undertook to the end.

(1884.)

DEAN WACE ON
HISTORICAL CRITICISM OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT

Whoever is to interpret Christian writings, and distinguish the false from the spurious, must be in sympathy with essential Christian truth. Criticism is really "high" in proportion as it can enter into the thought and heart of the Apostles, in proportion as it is animated and controlled by the spirit which inspired them and can share the spiritual experiences by which they were moved. For this reason, the tradition of the Church, so far as it represents the spiritual judgment of Christians, embodies, after all, a far "higher" criticism than that which has hitherto usurped its name.

(1886.)

LORD SALISBURY ON IRELAND

We are told that we are to have confidence in the Irish people. Well, confidence depends upon the people in whom you are to confide. You would not confide free representative institutions to the Hottentots, for instance. Nor would you confide them to the Oriental nations whom you are governing in India. I doubt whether you could confide representative institutions to the Russians in any great security. When you come to narrow it down you will find that self-government works admirably well when it is confided to people who are of Teutonic race, but it does not work so well when people of other races are called upon to join in it.

My policy is that Parliament should enable the Government of England to govern Ireland honestly, consistently and resolutely for twenty years, and then Ireland will be fit to accept any gifts in the way of local government or repeal of coercion laws that you may wish to give her. What she wants is government that does not flinch, that does not vary, government that she cannot hope to beat down by agitation at Westminster.

(1886.)

DEAN WACE ON AGNOSTICISM

Why do we believe that Jesus Christ redeemed all mankind? Because He said so. There is no other ultimate ground for it. . . .

For a man to urge as an escape from this article of belief that he has no means of a scientific knowledge of the unseen world, or of the future, is irrelevant. His difference from Christians lies not in the fact that he has no knowledge of these things, but that he does not believe the authority on which they are said. He may prefer to call himself an Agnostic; but his real name is an older one — he is an Infidel, that is to say, an unbeliever. The word Infidel, perhaps, carries an unpleasant significance. Perhaps it is right that it should. It is, and ought to be, an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe Jesus Christ. It is, indeed, an awful thing to say. . . .

The question of a living faith in a living God and Saviour, with all it involves, is too urgent and momentous a thing to be put aside with a philosophical “I don’t know.” The best blood in the world has been shed over it; the deepest personal, social and even political problems are still bound up with it.

(1888.)

“ THE DAILY NEWS ” ON
“ THE DOLL’S HOUSE ”

It is simply as a mild picture of domestic life in Christiania that [Ibsen’s *Doll’s House*] has any interest at all.

(1889.)

SIR GILBERT SCOTT ON
THE RESTORATION OF ANCIENT CHURCHES

The reckless manner in which the restoration of our ancient churches is too frequently carried out is to me a continual source of grief and indignation.

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Manet was a painter wholly devoid of the colour-sense, possessing an eye singularly little tamed by accepted convention, and lacking perseverance in execution. He succeeded in painting a scene with striking effect up to a certain still elementary point, and could carry it no further. He determined at last to found a school whose principle should be to stop at that elementary point, and he found plenty of imitators. . . .

Mr. P. Wilson Steer is the most extravagant of all. His landscapes are simply and crudely horrid.

(1889.)

**GLADSTONE ON
IRREVERENT SPECULATION**

**Irreverent speculation on the doings and designs
of God by those who believe in Him is itself a sin.**

ROBERT BUCHANAN ON
IBSEN

To discuss a shabby second-hand moralist, a picker-up of Goethe's unconsidered egoistic gospel, is simply to prick a wind-bag. What the small pessimists and belated socialists find in Ibsen is their own cynicism and scepticism "writ large." "There exists in two-thirds of men," said Saint Beuve, "a poet who died young and whom the man survives." The survival of Ibsen suggests highly disagreeable "mortuary reflections."

(1889.)

“THE ATHENÆUM” ON
ALFRED AUSTIN

In an age when manliness is largely at a discount in literature, and the chief object of every new aspirant is to outshout his neighbours, it is refreshing to take up the work of one who, having reformed his style on earlier and better methods, understands that there can be no true art without reticence, and that a writer's powers are revealed less by licence than by self-restraint. . . . Mr. Austin's poetry has the sterling qualities of saneness and sobriety, and in saying this we pay him what is, in these hysterical days, assuredly no empty compliment.

Mr. Austin stands far higher in our estimation than the great majority of his poetical contemporaries and we shall continue to welcome the outcome of his strong but unequal genius with unabated interest and respect.

(1889.)

“THE ATHENÆUM” ON
GEORGE MOORE

Mr. George Moore is a capable writer . . . and if he could cultivate a serener temper, and would give up dabbling in mud, it would appear that his realism is in truth not so bad as he would have us believe. . . . But the same limitation of his powers which has been noticeable in his other books is still obvious : he has no humour. . . . He might do well to consider whether the most rigid realism will ever make up for the want of the novelist's greatest gift.

(1889.)

“ THE SATURDAY REVIEW ” ON
“ ROSMERSHOLM ”

[Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*] is neither science, nor art, nor philosophy, nor romance. It is not observation, except of persons in delirium, *tremens* or other. It is simply bosh.

(1890.)

“ THE QUARTERLY REVIEW ” ON
“ TESS OF THE D’URBERVILLES ”

Mr. Hardy has told an extremely disagreeable story in an extremely disagreeable manner, which is not rendered less so by his affectation of expounding a great moral law, or by the ridiculous character of some of the scenes into which this affectation plunges the reader. . . .

The coarseness and disagreeableness of his manner come from within rather than from without. That they come unconsciously we most willingly believe ; indeed it would be only charity to suppose that they come from an inherent failure in the necessity for good taste, and a lack of the intellectual cultivation that can sometimes avail to supply its place, added to a choice of subject which must always be fatal to an author, no matter what his other opinions may be, who has not those safeguards.

(1892.)

HERBERT SPENCER'S ADVICE
TO A MOTHER
ON THE CARE OF HER CHILDREN

May I make a suggestion with respect to clothing ? There is an enormous amount of mischief consequent upon the *uneven circulation* which is caused by uneven covering. The *rationale* of the matter is a very simple one.

The vascular system constituted by the heart and by the ramifying system of blood-vessels is a closed cavity having elastic walls. Of necessity, if you constrict the walls of any part of this cavity, the blood has to go somewhere, and it is thrust into some other parts of the cavity. If the constriction is great and extends over a considerable area, the pressure of blood throughout the unconstricted vessels becomes great and if any of them are feeble they dilate, producing local congestion. This, if the cold and consequent constriction are long continued, is productive of mischief – in some cases extreme mischief. I have myself experienced the result in producing increased congestion of the brain. The internal organs of the body are the parts which have their blood-vessels unduly distended by the pressure and if any of them are feebler than the rest, more or less disturbance of function results. In one case, and a most common one, there may be congestion of the respiratory membranes and a cold or a cough, but in other cases, congestion

is in the alimentary canal and some bowel attack results.

The thing to be aimed at in clothing is such a distribution of covering as shall keep all parts evenly warmed.

(1892.)

GLADSTONE ON
FEMALE SUFFRAGE

As this is not a party question, nor a class question, so neither is it a sex question. I have no fear lest the woman should encroach upon the power of the man. The fear I have is, lest we should invite her unwittingly to trespass upon the delicacy, the purity, the refinement, the elevation of her own nature, which are the present sources of its power.

(1892.)

BALFOUR ON
THE OUTBREAK OF THE BOER WAR

Whatever this country has to go through, and whatever sacrifices are to be made, they will be made in the interests of the rights of men and of civilisation.

(1899.)

THE BOER WAR

We are going to war in defence of principles.

Joseph Chamberlain, October, 1899.

We are going to war because we are determined that Queen Victoria and not President Krüger shall be supreme.

Col Saunderson, M.P., October, 1899.

Preaching yesterday afternoon at Eastbourne, the Bishop of Chichester said he believed from the bottom of his heart that the war was not only an inevitable war, but a just war and a righteous war. It was a war of light against darkness, a war of liberty against injustice, the only means whereby true peace and real liberty and perfect justice might be secured in that country for the future. He believed England to be the righteous instrument of God.

"The Times," December, 1899.

LORD ROSEBERY ON
THE LONELINESS OF ENGLAND

When I think of this little island of ours, floating, as it were, so lonely in these northern seas, viewed with such jealousy, with such hostility, with such foiled ambition by the great empires of the world, so friendless amongst nations which count their armies by embattled millions – when I think of this little island, of the work which it has undertaken, of the Empire that it has founded, and which it is determined to maintain, when I think of this, of our expenditure – 112 million a year in a time of peace – of the high pressure under which we live, of the responsibilities which we have undertaken, I confess I have no hesitation in recurring to the opinion of Chatham and saying once more – “ Be one people, forget everything for the public.” I do not care, I do not view with any dismay or distress the responsibilities or the engagements of which we have spoken so long as we remain a united people.

As our Shakespeare says :—

*Naught shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.*

“THE DAILY TELEGRAPH” ON
THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA

The Queen is dead, and with the strange and bitter word that tolls in our hearing for the day of most solemn and majestic sorrow the world has ever known, the sense of a desolate void lies cold upon the heart of the nation, and the mortal shadow has fallen upon us that envelops the empire like a pall. How shall we speak of an infinite loss, how think of it in the hour when utterance is benumbed by a grief that is impossible to realise, and intelligence overwhelmed by the unimaginable touch of fate that extinguishes an epoch, that removes the central figure of all the earth – that affects the unnumbered millions of mankind with universal mourning, and will be bitterly remembered and felt through history to the last vibration of time ?

The golden reign is closed. The supreme woman of the world, best of the highest, greatest of the good, is gone. The Victorian age is over. Never, never was loss like this, so inward and profound that only the slow years can reveal its true reality. The Queen is dead.

(January 23rd, 1901.)

FINIS

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